PRESS RELEASE

Ombudsman looks into problem of abandoned vehicles on government land

The Ombudsman, Ms Winnie Chiu, today (22 June) announced the launch of a direct investigation to examine the problem of abandoned vehicles on government land.

There are occasional media reports about prolonged occupation of public parking spaces or the roadside by abandoned vehicles in various districts. For years, the government departments concerned had neither removed the abandoned vehicles promptly nor taken enforcement action and effective measures proactively to deter such behaviour, thereby allowing the problem to persist.

In its Report No. 34 in 2000, the Audit Commission pointed out the absence of any legislation in Hong Kong to hold the registered owners of vehicles responsible for proper disposal of their vehicles, and recommended that the existing legislation be amended to impose penalties on irresponsible owners who fail to properly dispose of their vehicles. The preliminary inquiry by the Office of The Ombudsman has revealed that currently the Hong Kong Police Force will take action against abandoned vehicles causing danger or traffic obstruction on public roads pursuant to the Road Traffic Ordinance. Where an abandoned vehicle is parked on government land without causing danger or traffic obstruction, the Lands Department (LandsD) will post a notice on it or authorise the Transport Department (TD) to do so in accordance with the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance, demanding the removal of that vehicle by a specified date, or the Government will remove and confiscate it, and consider prosecuting the occupier concerned.

Nevertheless, there have been no successful cases of prosecution since 2007. For cases involving abandoned vehicles on government land, the LandsD often encounters difficulties in tracing the occupier or obtaining sufficient evidence to bring about prosecution even though the information on the last registered owner is available.

Ms Chiu said, “For many years, abandoned vehicles have been found in various districts in Hong Kong. This long-standing issue has raised doubts about the adequacy and effectiveness of the related government strategies and measures. Hence, we decided to initiate a direct investigation to probe into the effectiveness of measures adopted by the TD and the LandsD in tackling the problem of abandoned vehicles on government land. Where necessary, we will make recommendations to the departments for improvement.”

The Ombudsman welcomes views from members of the public on this topic. Written submissions should reach the Office of The Ombudsman by 22 July 2021:

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Office of The Ombudsman
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